TAFT, T. R., AND THE G. O. P. by William Allen White

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The Saturday Review of Literature

VOL. XXI No. 1 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1939 FIFTEEN CENTS

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In Maud's day *chaperones were a social requisite even on church picnics. but the debs of '80 managed well*

MAUD

EDITED AND ARRANGED FOR PUBLICATION

By

RICHARD LEE STROUT

"The literary find of the autumn," (*Chicago News*). "As delicious and intimate and surprising a picture of Victorian America as it has been my fortune to find," (*New York Herald Tribune*). "There is in it about all the enthusiasm and innocence and color a reader could wish," (*New York Times*). $3.50

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, NEW YORK

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Taft, T. R., and the G. O. P.

BY

WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

The Chief Justice, his children and grandchildren.

MR. PRINGLE has written a most important book.* Here, for the first time, is recorded definitely William Howard Taft's "side" of the Taft-Roosevelt feud, one of the important breaks in friendship between two major statesmen which have affected American history. The fact that Mr. Pringle had access to the correspondence of Mr. Taft gives the story authenticity, and an intimacy which is rarely found in the stories of the personal quarrels of modern statesmen.

The Taft letters, which form the backbone of this study of Mr. Pringle's hero, are probably the most revealing letters that have ever documented the life of an American statesman, not even excepting Lincoln. These letters begin at the cradle and end after the funeral of the Chief Justice. They are family letters, letters that passed between his parents and his brothers, letters that his mother wrote to friends before his birth and while he was a baby, his own letters to the girl he married, to his brothers and his children, letters from the Philippines and the White House to fellow-statesmen, heartbroken letters written during the campaign of 1912 when he and Theodore Roosevelt, who had been friends from youth, broke their friendship. When he came to the Supreme bench he still wrote letters, intimate letters and indiscreet, and lovely letters describing political life in Washington during the administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover.

Such an epistolary record has never been made before by a man of the first political rank. The joy and gorgeousness of these letters is that they are not addressed to posterity. They have all the indiscretion of a man writing without caring a fig what the next generation may think of him. He has made a picture of himself which Mr. Pringle has only to unveil.

Mr. Pringle has done more than annotate and identify these letters in time and place. He has written a narrative around them which tells the story of the United States, its social, economic, and political development, which would stand up even without the letters. Through those sixty years which saw the geographical frontier of our country close, which saw the railroads all built, the states all confined in their boundaries, the cities of the West all laid out upon the campfires of the frontiersmen; years which saw economic tragedy open the turn of the century, when the American people, baffled and bewildered, were wondering why the American faith was being challenged—through all those years we see the figure of William Howard Taft ambling along, a large, slow-moving, smiling, expansive, obviously tender-hearted and folksy kind of man. He goes apparently without effort from one small office in Cincinnati to the next larger one, turns up as a United States Circuit Judge in his late thirties, as a Governor of the Philippines in his early forties, becomes a member of Roosevelt's cabinet, and lands comfortably in the White House in early middle age. It is all quite incidental to a jolly, happy, easy-going life in which Taft's capacity for affectionate friendship grows through the years.

William Howard Taft came of good New England stock. His father was a member of the Cabinet in Grant's day, and his grandparents before him were Somebody. He was born to the purple if ever a Midwestern American was. It did not surprise him nor greatly interest him that he was the child of fate, the darling of the political gods. Yet, for all his easy acceptance of Olympian favors, he was never arrogant about it. He assumed nothing and blandly took everything.

Reading this story and checking it against the letters, one can sense that he was not surprised at the luck which puzzled his friends and acquaintances in American politics. For him these things just were. Calvin Coolidge, who had somewhat the same easy trip up the escalator of American politics, wormed his way through and past a crowd of ambitious men. Coolidge did not fight for the honors that came to him, but he foresaw them, put himself in the way of them, and had his various official chairs warm before anyone realized he was there. Not so with Taft. Luck—somehow the same kind of luck that was later known as the Coolidge luck—came to Taft because he was his father's son, his wife's husband, his brothers' idol, because he was from Yale, because he was a good companion, an ideal fellow in the inner circle of Washington politics, and finally, because his brothers' money and Theodore Roosevelt's influence landed him in the Presidency.

No one can doubt the genuine affection that bound Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft for a decade. Both these men had infinite capacity for friendship. Moreover, in each of them their friendships overlapped political lines. Theodore Roosevelt at least could oppose a man bitterly and hold him in high respect and warm esteem personally. He and Henry Cabot Lodge differed fundamen-

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT. By Henry F. Pringle. New York: Farrar & Rinehart. 1939. 2 vols., 1106 pp., with index. $7.50.

Next Week

MY LIFE
By HAVELOCK ELLIS
Reviewed by Bernard DeVoto

THE FATE OF MAN
By H. G. WELLS
Reviewed by Jacques Barzun

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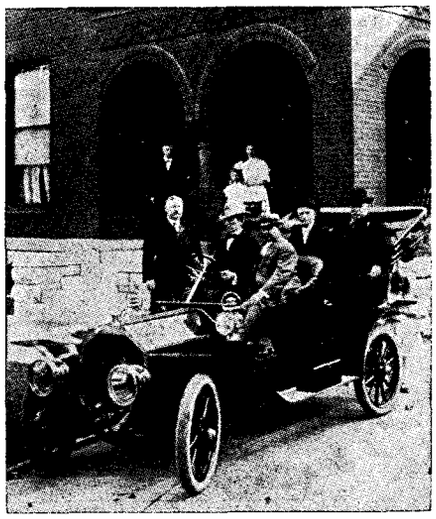
tally upon most issues during the last decade and a half of their lives. Yet they were "Cabot" and "Theodore" to each other through it all. Roosevelt took his politics emotionally, strenuously, often passionately, and he had definite ambitions. He knew where he was going politically and he kept his eye on the ball. Victory meant something to him. He had a set of principles and they bothered him when he found himself thwarted in following them. But except in the case of his friend Taft, Roosevelt did not let his politics interfere with his friendships.

A few years ago Mr. Pringle wrote a most readable and significant book about Theodore Roosevelt. In that volume, and now in this life of William Howard Taft, he makes it plain that he does not accept the aura of Theodore Roosevelt's sainthood. Some of the more feline qualities of the first Roosevelt offend Mr. Pringle, and in this new book the biographer of the two presidents is the partisan of President Taft. But Mr. Pringle does paint a living and likable picture of Theodore Roosevelt here, and while he does not try to hold an even balance over the break between Taft and the first Roosevelt, he does paint an honest picture of Taft—so honest, that it would almost justify the Roosevelt position in the break with Taft.

For as a matter of honest truth, the break in their friendship was inherent in their characters. Despite the fact that Taft seemed to be a reincarnation of the smiling Buddha, benevolent, and slowed down by the tremendous inertia below his collar button, he was at heart a conservative. Compared with Theodore Roosevelt, Mr. Taft was a bitter, black reactionary, and the giggling gurgle of his amiable chuckle covered a profound belief in things as they are, in the gods of the constituted order, a belief which was surprising when one found it hidden behind such a gracious and happy countenance. Taft did not flaunt his conservatism. Roosevelt wore his liberalism on his sleeve with his heart's core there. Taft ran Roosevelt's errands as his Secretary of War and was an effective if happy-go-lucky lieutenant. But he had no idea of being a lieutenant when he got to the White House. Probably he had no idea that a man of Roosevelt's "class," a Harvard man, could take so seriously what Taft considered the fundamental nonsense that Bryan had been preaching and which Taft felt Roosevelt was espousing. For some strange, inexplicable political reason that espousal of lunacy puzzled Taft but did not affect his affection for his friend.



The first motorized President (Kansas City, 1908).

The phrase "the Roosevelt policies" was currently accepted by Taft and his friends in 1907 while he was a candidate, and in 1908 when he was on the Republican ticket. But it had no more real meaning to Taft and his brothers Charles and Henry than the nebular hypothesis or the Mendelian law, both good things in their way, which gentlemen in President Roosevelt's circle accepted but did not relate to reality.

So William Howard Taft came to the White House. Mr. Pringle's record of the personal break between Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, documented by the letters of President Taft and his friends, is a political tragedy. But there are no "ifs" in history. Mr. Pringle's dramatic story of the Taft-Roosevelt brawl—for it became just that—is a superb piece of historical writing. Probably both the brawlers were thoroughly ashamed of themselves, and it is related in the Pringle biography how, after Taft's first public bitter personal denunciation of Roosevelt, he went to his bedroom, threw himself on the bed, and sobbed in sorrow that he had been brought by fell circumstance to utter the wicked words of his speech. Theodore Roosevelt was a different type. He did not weep; he swallowed his remorse, clicked his teeth, set his jaw, and went on. But nevertheless, no self-justification could soothe his inner spirit.

Quite apart from the story of this break between the two principals of the Pringle biography, we find in it also, swiftly and rather roughly sketched, the history of the Progressive movement. It was not born full-panoplied out of the brain of Theodore Roosevelt. The first Roosevelt took the complaint of Bryan against the rising power of the American plutocracy. Roosevelt sloughed off Bryan's financial follies and made Bryan's protest against the domination of the railroads in business and politics, and the control of the trusts in American commercial life, the center of the so-called "Roosevelt policies." And Bryan inherited his fight upon the railroads and trusts from the Populists, who had the grievance against monopoly from the Farmers Alliance, who in turn took the agrarian issues from the Greenbackers and the Grangers of the 1870s.

For more than forty years, inside the two major parties, a liberal and a conservative group has fought in each party for the control of nominations. Bryan, leading the liberal group, won in the Democratic party in the 90s. Theodore Roosevelt, leading the liberal group, won in the Republican party in the first decade of the century. When Roosevelt passed from the scene, La Follette took charge of the liberal group in the Republican party, after Wilson had surrendered leadership of the triumphant liberal group in the Democratic party. La Follette and his progressive senators held the balance of power in government through the Republican administrations of Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Then, in 1932, the conservatives in the Democratic party who had held the reins there since Bryan's death were overthrown by Franklin Roosevelt, and the struggle, which began forty years before with the two factions in the two parties, rose again.

Mr. Pringle's book outlines this fifty-years' struggle without emphasizing it. The struggle is implied rather than expounded and explained. But it is there. Mr. Pringle's story is deeply concerned only in the contest between the liberals and the conservatives in the Republican party. He neglects to identify the similar contemporary struggle in the Democratic party, which might well have been sketched in to make the conflict between the forces of Taft and Roosevelt, from 1909 to 1913, more intelligible. It was merely a part of the pulling and hauling inside the parties, made necessary perhaps by our electoral college, which seems to prohibit the organization of a third party in the United States.

But even though Mr. Pringle neglects this phase of the national struggle, he has written a most important book. It is a scholarly job, but his scholarship never goes to seed in mere erudition. In the race for the Pulitzer prize next spring, this book cannot be neglected.

THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Company, Inc., 420 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. Joseph Hilton Smyth, President; Harrison Smith, Vice-President and Treasurer; Amy Loveman, Secretary. Subscription $4 a year. Printed in U. S. A. Vol. XXI, No. 1, October 28, 1939. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Hellenic Heritage

THE LIFE OF GREECE. By Will Durant. New York: Simon & Schuster. 1939. 755 pp., with index. $3.95.

Reviewed by C. A. ROBINSON, JR.

THIS is a dramatic and at times an exciting book. Will Durant has undertaken to tell, in popular fashion, the whole story of ancient Greece from prehistoric days to the Roman conquest. It is a large order, but Durant knows the subject and writes beautifully and enthusiastically.

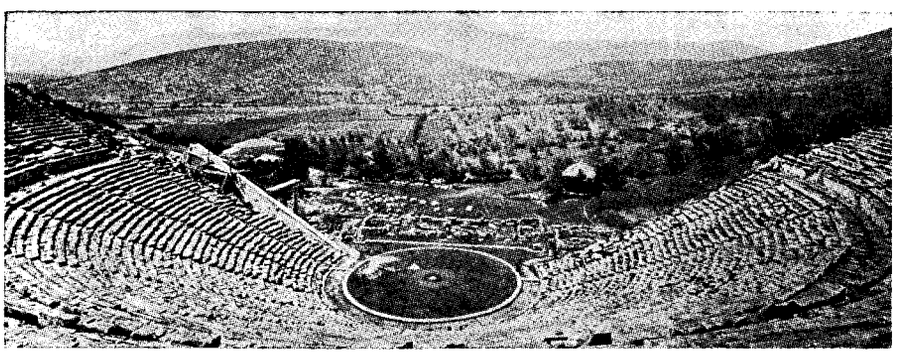
The book opens with an account of the great Bronze Age civilization of ancient Greece. Here we have, in their proper setting, Schliemann, the pioneer in archeology, and Sir Arthur Evans, the only man to whom it has been given to excavate on his own land a complete and brilliant epoch of human history and to live to see its scholarly and sumptuous publication. From Crete, Mycenae, and Troy we pass to archaic Greece, those centuries of exuberant growth when the Greeks built upon the ruins of the past. Although the enlarged Greek world (unlike the Roman) lacks a central unifying theme and presents, instead, a variety of leagues and city-states, nevertheless Durant by his ability to see the total picture in perspective gives a well-rounded story.

He has been quite right in reserving the kernel of the book for the Golden Age of Greece. It is a thrilling moment in history, and now that we ourselves are forced to reappraise human values it would be well for our own republic if many of its citizens should read Durant's sympathetic account. Here we have the Athenian experiment in democracy—the most precious contribution of the Greeks to posterity—the art, literature, religion, and philosophy of Periclean Greece, no less than the social and economic background. The Greeks had, no doubt, their share of wars, but Durant has been careful to emphasize the significance of only the momentous struggles. The book concludes with sections on the fourth century and on the Hellenistic Age.

The book is handsomely printed and is enriched with various tables and maps. It is a pity that a print could not have been found of the Parthenon with its northern colonnade restored; the picture of the entrance to the Athenian Acropolis is also out-of-date. Aside from this, however, the list of sixty-four illustrations is probably as good as any two people will ever be able to agree upon. It seems strange that Will Durant should not catch the meaning and spirit of archaic Greek art, but differences of opinion are inevitable; and it is remarkable, too, that in a book of this scope there should be so few errors of fact.

So far as the book has any fundamental weakness, it lies in occasional false premises, which are themselves the product of not keeping abreast of recent research. Alexander is a case in point. Although Mr. Durant writes enthusiastically of the great Macedonian, the final impression he gives us is of a drunken youth, a man who did not reach maturity of mind, a barbarian rather than a Greek king—a conventional enough picture, if you do not know the facts. Durant, obviously, has never heard of Tarn's epoch-making address before the British Academy in 1933, where it was definitely established that Alexander was the first person in history to dream of the brotherhood of man; this is the greater pity, for Durant could have done the subject justice. Preferring Weigall's cheap account to Wilcken's urbane biography is not a matter of opinion; it is not even a matter of liking one ancient biographer better than another. Few men in history have been so maligned and exalted as Alexander was in antiquity, so that what we have to do is to study the sources of the ancient biographers themselves; when that is done, a quite different picture of Alexander emerges. This it is which more than once lends an air of unreality to "The Life of Greece"—a book which, nevertheless, is the best of its kind.

C. A. Robinson, Jr., is on the faculty of Brown's University. His revision of Botsford's noted "Hellenic History" has recently been published.



Theater of Epidaurus. From "The Life of Greece."

Watershed of History

THE HUNDREDTH YEAR. By Philip Guedalla. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1939. 312 pp., with index. $3.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

NINETEEN THIRTY-SIX was the hundredth year since the coronation of Queen Victoria, and early in the hundred and first England was expecting another coronation. It seemed appropriate, therefore, to celebrate the new reign with a rapid sketch of a century which had been peculiarly England's. Before the American edition of Philip Guedalla's "The Hundred Years" had left the presses in 1937, however, odd things had happened to the last year of the century and to the British royal family. In 1936 the world, and the great nation which still sat virtuously on top of it, took some hard knocks, knocks which almost compelled a sequel called "The Hundredth Year."

It is hard to identify a new epoch at its inception, and Mr. Guedalla's panorama of the short and troubled reign of Edward VIII may have been influenced by his readiness to commemorate a coronation which did not take place; nevertheless it is not unlikely that future historians will confirm his judgment that 1936 marked a watershed in European history, though even British historians may not give the personal tragedy of the abdication quite the prominence that he does. These future historians will give greater space to the final breakdown of any pretense at a European system of public law in the forcible occupation of the Rhineland—first step on the road to Warsaw; in the conquest of Ethiopia by mustard gas; and in the overthrow of the democratic republic of Spain by a military clique with the active support of two fascist dictatorships and the cowed acquiescence of all the states which labeled themselves democracies. But they will be grateful for Mr. Guedalla's moving account of the abdication, and they will not be able to complain that he has failed to appreciate the meaning of other events.

It is hardly necessary now to tell any literate person how Philip Guedalla writes. This book reminds us that eighteenth-century grace with steel at the end of its hand may still be deadly; the thrusts, for instance, which impale Mr. Stanley Baldwin—as he was then—are as neat as Alexander Pope's. The manner of the book is familiar, but its method is newer, something that was approached but not so firmly grasped in "The Hundred Years," a series of pictures of

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historic moments, brilliantly visualized and surrounded by compact comment, the method, in fact, of a good newsreel, with the camera focused by an historian. For if this author has written history with the nervous vividness of contemporary journalism, he writes journalism with the perspective and detachment of good history. Nor does the detachment weaken the force of what is said: "An internal policy of non-resistance to armed violence would eventually condemn any society to dissolution, and international society was no exception to the rule." (Said of the Ethiopian crisis.) And a few pages farther on: "Mr. Neville Chamberlain . . . informed an audience that the policy of sanctions had failed . . . and that its continuance would be the very midsummer of madness. His observation, in so far as it related to the time of the year, was just; but was it altogether sane to face with equanimity the dissolution of the slender ties uniting international society? Mr. Chamberlain would know some day." That was written last spring. Already it rings with the finality of something Gibbon said about a Byzantine minister.

The Life of a Village

THE WEDDING RING. By Elizabeth Hollister Frost. New York: Coward-McCann. 1939. 209 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by AMY LOVEMAN

A NOVEL in name, this is more literally a collection of tales bound lightly together by the recurrence in many of them of characters which have appeared in others. It is the sort of book which the French produce with particular felicity and which more rarely is successfully written by Anglo-Saxons. Miss Frost has captured the flavor of the peasant dialect, the mood and mind of simple people, so that they walk through her pages in the directness of their relationships with one another and with life. Here in the setting of a tiny hill hamlet are young and old, busy with their loves and their hates, their crafts and fellowships and ingenious wiles. Miss Frost knows her peasant folk, their commingling of almost primitive passions with sterling loyalties and ready helpfulness to those in trouble. Children sprawl all through the book though they play only a minor part in it, suspicion and cunning cast a shadow over it, sunshine caresses it. It is good, earthy stuff, sturdy and simple in its dialogue, with cruelty and ugliness cropping up in it but with a quality of poetic emotion that gives it impact and beauty. It moves with simplicity and dignity.

Embattled Farmers of Reconstruction

LIGHTWOOD. By Brainard Cheney. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1939. 369 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by WILLIAM JAY GOLD

HERE is a Southern novel with a theme that is significantly American. It tells the story of men trying to preserve the integrity of their human rights against the encroachments of property rights: an old story, but one that has become increasingly important in our fiction as well as in our social and national life.

"Lightwood" is a Southern book by virtue of its setting in the Georgia of post-Civil-War days, and it includes a description of a race riot as well as the use of "Yankee" as an epithet of opprobrium. But the kernel of the book is the fight of Micajah Corn and the other wool-hat farmers of the pine-woods region to prevent a Northern-owned lumber company from dispossessing them from their farms. It is the theme of "The Grapes of Wrath" translated into Georgia and into an earlier period.

The farmers are for the most part not vocal, and they don't understand "lawing" procedure and meaning. What articulate leaders they manage to attract come to them only for selfish reasons, and they desert the farmers' cause as soon as their own interests offer them a higher goal. The law of Georgia is with the farmers; but the lumber company, finding Georgia courts and juries ruling against its claims, wangles the suits of ejectment into the Federal—Yankee—court at Macon, which gives the decisions it seeks. The best section of the book describes the acts of sabotage, arson, and assassination that the farmers carry out against the corporation and its agents—only to find that their battle is lost. Farmers are only men, but corporations go on forever.

From the jacket of "Lightwood"

The book is marked by certain unfortunate faults, some of construction and some of writing. A long recollection by Micajah, giving details of his family history and a précis of what has gone before, is very clumsily handled. Also, the book curiously seems to fall into disjointed parts. The writing is not always successful, furthermore; the rendering of the farmers' Georgia speech in particular is stilted and unnatural.

But all this aside, you can read the book with interest and at times even with excitement. "Lightwood" seems to be Mr. Cheney's first novel—and it is no inconsiderable achievement.

William Jay Gold is managing editor of the Virginia Quarterly Review.

Colonial Painters

AMERICA'S OLD MASTERS. By James Thomas Flexner. New York: The Viking Press. 1939. 332 *pp., with index.* $3.75.

Reviewed by FRANK JEWETT MATHER

AT first blush there might seem little promise in a book on such familiar figures as Benjamin West, Copley, Charles Willson Peale, and Gilbert Stuart, but Mr. Flexner has wrought his biographical material into a volume of exceptional interest. This success depends upon playing up without overemphasis certain contrasts and paradoxes inherent in the subject, but often overlooked. Thus the most worthy, famous, and successful of these colonial American artists, Benjamin West, was also the dullest and poorest, while the eminently unreliable and shifty Gilbert Stuart made the classic portrait of that paragon of probity and reliability, George Washington.

The most original feature of a book which necessarily in the main rests on diligent compilation, is the revaluation of Stuart's character. Mr. Flexner, quite ruthlessly, but also justly, sweeps away the accumulated mass of apologetics and hero-worship, which Stuart's memory has too long enjoyed. Benjamin West is presented as a very curious instance of an artist whose intelligence was far superior to his gift as a painter. He was constantly an innovator. His "Agrippina" anticipated the pseudo-classicism of David; his "Death of Wolfe" cleared the way for Horace Vernet and Baron Gras; his "Death on the White Horse" may be said to herald the Romantic movement. Abundantly ingenious, he wholly lacked charm and spontaneity in his works, paradoxically commanding both qualities in his personality. All this Mr. Flexner makes vivid and not a little pathetic. This book is well printed and illustrated. Its interest extends well beyond its nominal theme.

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Girl Thinking Out Loud

KITTY FOYLE. By Christopher Morley. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1939. 340 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by J. P. MARQUAND

IN his new novel Christopher Morley has invaded the tempting but technically baffling field of first-person narrative. By allowing his heroine to tell her story and her thoughts much in the manner of the stream-of-consciousness school, tempered, however, by the clarity of older autobiographical technique, he has produced a vivid and entertaining novel filled with wise humor and a good deal of pathos,—a skillfully written book which defeats itself in a measure by its own brilliance and the limitations of its form.

Kitty Foyle is a modern girl of twenty-eight when she reviews her life in the terms of an emotional crisis from which she is recovering, and she tells her story swiftly, warmly, ungrammatically, as though she were thinking or speaking but certainly not as though she were writing. She tells with a frankness that is half realistic and half romantic of her girlhood in Philadelphia, where the Foyles were members of the lower ranks of the white-collar class. Her mother died when she was ten and Pop, an arthritic old Orangeman, looked after her. Mr. Foyle was a retired night-watchman and a retired cricket professional, and his greatest pride was his friendship with the Philadelphia gentlemen who played the English game. It was through her father's connection with the cricket aristocracy that she met a nice boy of one of the first families, Wyn Strafford, her lover. Kitty moves from childhood to adolescence amidst plain talk and healthy profanity. Pop combatting his rheumatism by secret drinks of whisky, Myrtle, the part-time colored help, and Kitty's aunt and uncle and schoolmates in Illinois, where she spent four winters in her teens, help to furnish the background. She meets Wyn not long before her father's last illness, and when he kissed her—"after that it was always 'us'." She tells of her love frankly and poetically, but even in the midst of it she is aware of the tragic differences between herself and her aristocrat. She wonders if she might not have made him an American instead of a unit in a class. She could have married him if she wanted, but her pride and her integrity stood in the way, and the great love of her life ended by her own good judgment. We leave her picking up the pieces and carrying on as a white-collar girl in New York. It is not a new story, but the materials which make up life are very seldom new.

The reader is reminded all through the thoughts and grief of Kitty Foyle of the author of "Where the Blue Begins" and of "Thunder on the Left." Every page has bits of the Morley philosophy, and this gives the narrative a glittering quality of the unexpected. It is done, however, in the words of Kitty Foyle. "Men are so sentimental they've pretty near taught women to be sentimental too." . . . "Nobody knows what she really believes. You've got to guess at it by how you find yourself acting." . . . "I bet Eternity is just not to be thinking." . . . "A man can always fall back on his pipe if the cigarettes run short, but what can a woman fall back on?"

It is unfortunate that "Kitty Foyle" had to be a novel, because wit and wisdom are only the by-products of convincing fiction. The truth is that Mr. Morley has gambled on a tour de force instead of playing safe. The narrator might better have been a person of minor importance to the plot, a device often successfully employed for the purposes of atmosphere and authenticity, or the whole story might have been done in the third person. Both these methods would have given Kitty Foyle a perspective and proportion which she now lacks. As it is, she is required to tell a worldly, sophisticated story, to analyze the effect of environment on character, to speak the thoughts of her author, and to be Kitty Foyle, the heroine, a white-collar girl and the graduate of a business college. It is not an impossible assignment, but one which has great dangers. What actually happens is that she does not take the form of an integrated character. In spite of Mr. Morley's best efforts she is an intellectual abstraction in an intellectual equation and not a girl who has loved and who has achieved a victory by renunciation.

Dilemma in the Foreign Colony

FOUR-PART SETTING. By Ann Bridge. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. (Atlantic Monthly Press). 1939. 447 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MARGARET M. MACKAY

IN a harmonious theme of English people in Peking, the voices of the leading characters sing their way through Ann Bridge's new novel. The soprano voice which carries the melody—sometimes clear, sometimes faltering—is that of Rose Pelham, a subtly attractive young wife who has fled from Cairo, humiliated by the unfaithfulness of her brilliant husband.

In China Rose is the guest of her cousins, Anastasia Lydiard and her brother Antony. To assuage her lonely frustration, Rose slips into an affair with Captain Henry Hargreaves. Their relationship is tested unsuccessfully when they join in a camping trip to the Trappist Monastery in the Western Hills, in company with the Lydiards and a truculently clever young journalist named Roy Hillier. It is the growth of a profound love between Rose and Antony which forms the book's climax of struggle—a love made doubly difficult because a divorce would ruin the career of her husband. She must spoil either his life or her own; and her bewildered unhappy groping toward a choice makes the final variation on the theme.

Pearl Freeman
Ann Bridge

Sketched visually, the outline of the story seems to follow the same structure as Miss Bridge's "Peking Picnic." The party travels through the Western Hills by donkey caravan; the trail is menaced by disbanded soldiers. And, likewise, the intimacy brought about by the hardships and beauties of the journey causes emotional changes in the interaction of the characters.

The people, however, are by no means the same. Rose Pelham is sympathetically drawn as the unconscious *femme fatale;* and Miss Bridge, with her adroit sophistication in the handling of men and women, has placed the girl in thoughtful relation to her husband, to Henry Hargreaves, and to Antony.

With the brilliant "Peking Picnic" inevitably in mind, one looks eagerly for the same fluid, luminous images in these new observations of the Peking countryside. There are not so many, perhaps—since the author has been away from North China for at least a decade. She has been wise to confine her story to the pre-Japanese period which she herself knew. Her evocation of the smooth easy-going humorous tempo of life in the foreign colony is so skilled as to cause a pang of homesickness in us who live there.

Margaret Mackprang Mackay, who has lived in China for many years, is the author of "Lady with Jade."

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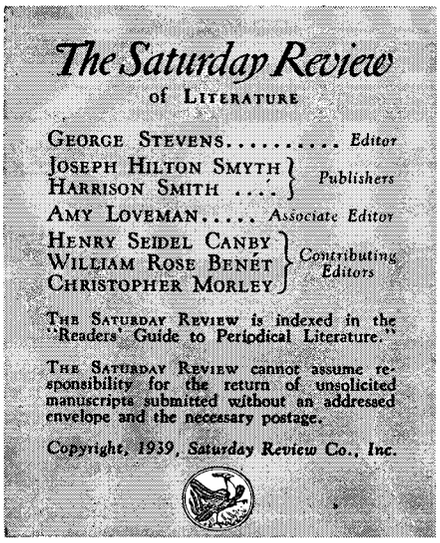
The Saturday Review
of Literature

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW is indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature."

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Words Breed War

OMINOUSLY timely is the publication of the first extensive study of the workings of the Creel Committee during World War No. 1. Three quarters of the records of the Committee of Public Information were mysteriously destroyed, but the remaining fourth were painstakingly combed over by James R. Mock and Cedric Larson for their book, "Words That Won the War."* It is obvious that, with the chaos of a second World War clouding the present, the book is timely. More important than its timeliness, however, is the ominous note it strikes. For the Committee of Public Information—in reality a government agency for censorship and propaganda—is unfortunately not simply an odd phase of past American history. Rather it is an unpleasant fact that is in danger of repeating itself. The resultant threat to intellectual freedom and integrity is apparent.

Most students of contemporary American history have been aware that many of the major issues of the World War of a quarter of a century ago were extravagantly and deliberately exaggerated; first to gain American sympathies for the Allies, and later to carry on the belligerent spirit necessary to an America engaged in war. To blame American participation in that war solely on the devious workings of propaganda would be as ridiculous as it would be to blame it on Wall Street, although many historians have done both. What few have done, however, is to differentiate between the physical and economic consequences of war, as a tangible fact, and the myths and fictions of wartime propaganda, which no reparations committee, no peace treaty, can ever remove from the public mind.

The authors of "Words That Won the War" take pains to point out the power that George Creel might have abused, but did not, during his period of one-man control of the media of public opinion. That control was absolute and far-reaching. It extended beyond the simple phases of regimented and censored publications; it reached into the universities and the pulpits, the labor groups and the intellectuals, the cinema and what then corresponded to the radio—the four-minute speakers who locust-like swept over the countryside.

Were today a period of comparative world peace it would be easy to dismiss many of the intellectual extravagances of that period. But the liberties taken with the public mind in the World War years are again being taken today. From the objective vantage point of distance we sharply criticize the rewriting of German history, the reshaping of German scientific theories, that is taking place under Hitler's regime. Only a quarter of a century ago, however, under the leadership of Guy Stanton Ford, American scholars and professors were rewriting German history to fit the peculiar needs of the time. A few of the pamphlet titles alone are indicative: "Conquest and Kultur"; "Aims of the Germans in Their Own Words"; "German Militarism and Its German Critics"; "German Treatment of Conquered Territory."

It is obvious that democracy in the true sense ceases to exist, irrespective of the framework of the government, when regimentation of the public mind sets in. The fact that twenty-five years ago George Creel was not a Goebbels does not alter in one whit the fact that his power was the power of a Goebbels. The fact that the anti-German myths spread by press and pulpit and scholars during the World War were no more than superficial in their intellectual evils does not alter the fact that the machinery was set up to regiment and control, thoroughly and completely, the public mind.

And that machinery has not been allowed to rust into disuse. In theory we are still a neutral country, with the intellectual freedom supposedly inherent in neutrality. Already, however, definite governmental measures have been taken to mold the manner of our thinking on the current European muddle. Radio coverage has already been regimented, to such an extent that even the manner and tone of presenting European news has been dictated and agreed to by the major broadcasting companies.

The importance of propaganda in the present war has already been the subject of numerous articles. It is apparent that, to date, Britain's major efforts have been directed towards the conquest of German public opinion rather than the conquest of German territory. Instead of a barrage of "Big Berthas," a battle of radio broadcasts is taking place throughout Europe.

It may be argued that this is a bloodless manner of waging war, but unless one further argues that the state of the public mind is unimportant, it is a spiritually costly one. It is true that reason and debate would be a civilized substitute for armed force, but propaganda that poisons the mind of mankind is another matter.

J. H. S.

*WORDS THAT WON THE WAR. By James R. Mock and Cedric Larson. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1939. 372 pp., with index. $3.75.

Museum Piece

BY GORDON LAWRENCE

LO, there were giants in old days
When thunderous creatures strode the earth,
And tall fantastics came to birth
In darkness, in equivocal ways.
Beneath green fronds of mottled trees,
Behemoth, grave, incurious, rambled,
And the horned apparitions shambled,
Grim, by the shores of grey seas.
Staring-eyed, unwieldy things
Climbed the clear air on naked wings
Past the moth phantoms drifting by
And the green-lacquered dragonfly.

The old fantastics prowl no more.
All their cold armor's buried deep,
And all their heritage is sleep,
And all their fame is pedants' lore.
Yet through steep canyons of the mind
The vast hulks trample down the years,
Like a doomed army bright with spears,
Stupendous, impotent, and blind.

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Letters to the Editor: *More Opinions on "Americans and Poetry"*

Poetry and Lucidity

SIR:—In your issue of October 7 I have read with interest Leonard Bacon's article, "Americans and Poetry," but I wish the author had spoken more fully of the poetry of the last twenty years or so. Of course he implies much when he says, "Nor can any one defend the modern cult of the incomprehensible, with its quips and cranks and insoluble symbolisms." And, to be sure, there has been a deliberate attempt by some poets to destroy intelligibility. ("Pigeons on the grass alas.") But when we read the poetry of W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, and some of the other young poets, we have, it seems to me, a different problem. Auden is certainly one of the most vigorous of our contemporaries. In "Journal of an Airman," that apocalyptic vision of a civilization in collapse, he is obviously trying "to make vivid and alive what is in the air in his own time." If Auden fails to be lucid is it because he has made a cult of the incomprehensible? Or is it rather because he has tried to use as an integral part of his poetry certain types of expression which are as yet imperfectly assimilated into our mental life (for example, the technical language of aviation, of political propaganda, of psychological tests), but which are undoubtedly a part of it? This is an aspect of contemporary verse upon which many of us need enlightenment. It is not so much the pre-war poetry of the imagists which presents critical problems to the reader as the verse of the young poets who, until a few weeks ago, could be called the post-war group.

For Mr. Bacon's defense of the "solitary pleasures of the mind," and for his contention that people fail to read poetry because they have "declared war on solitude and meditation—and reading," I wish to express my enthusiasm and my hearty gratitude.

MARY ELIZABETH OSBORN.
Hood College,
Frederick, Md.

Miss Monroe and Spectrism

SIR:—In *The Saturday Review* of October 7th, Mr. Leonard Bacon says in speaking of the "Spectrist" Hoax of Mr. Arthur Ficke and Mr. Witter Bynner—

> And there was balm in Gilead when the two criminals proclaimed to a delighted public that their bait of incomprehensibility had been swallowed hook, line, and sinker by William Marion Reedy and Miss Harriet Monroe, *who I believe seldom or never mentioned the episode.* (Italics mine.)

It seems to me that this phrase I have italicized imputes to Harriet Monroe an uncandor which was never hers. She mentioned the episode of the "Spectrist" hoax editorially on several occasions in "Poetry, A Magazine of Verse." On Page 407-8 of her autobiography "A Poet's Life," published by the Macmillan Company in 1938, she says:

> Witter Bynner, with Arthur Ficke and Marjorie Seiffert as fellow conspirators in the tri-cities of Davenport, Rock Island, and Moline, carried their criticism of the imagists to the point of parody. Hobnobbing together, they called their group "The Spectrists," and rechristened themselves, two with change of sex, as Emmanuel Morgan, Ann Knish, and Elijah Hay. They had a lot of fun being taken seriously and getting accepted here and there. *Poetry was almost caught, for an "Emmanuel Morgan" poem was waiting guiltily for publication when careless gossiping betrayed the hoax.*

She adds an amusing letter from Mr. Bynner on the subject.

Surely, in view of such a frank and generous statement as that, it cannot be said justly of Harriet Monroe that she "seldom or never mentioned the episode."

EDITH FRANKLIN WYATT.
Chicago, Ill.

Mr. Bacon Replies

SIR:—Thank you for sending me Miss Wyatt's courteous letter. I am sorry if a luckless phrase seemed to her to contain an unfair imputation. My statement, which was based on conversation with one of the perpetrators of the hoax when it was young, means merely this, that Mr. Reedy and Miss Monroe were much embarrassed by the denouement of the intrigue. I have no doubt whatever that they were. But it would be too much if the victim of a practical joke would be proved *ipso facto* to lack candor. Reedy was doubtless candid. I *know* Miss Monroe was.

If Miss Wyatt desires my evidence for the truth of this position, she can find it on pages 228-229 of my book "Semicentennial." However often, rightly or wrongly, I may have disagreed with Miss Monroe as to theory or practice, no one has better reason than I to say that she was fair to her opponents. I had been one. And I bear witness to her fairness.

LEONARD BACON.
Peace Dale, R. I.

"True Western, Bar-X Romances, Cowboy Fiction, and Frontier Marshal. Howdy, stranger!"

Voltaire and Anatole France

SIR:—Dr. Alice B. Critchett of Boston, who received the first Mary Isabel Sibley Fellowship for study in France given by the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa last Spring, is preparing a book on the influence of Voltaire on Anatole France.

She would like to secure source material and would be very grateful if anyone possessing correspondence or other little-known material that might be helpful would communicate with her at 35 Arden Road, Watertown, Mass.

WM. A. SHIMER, *Secretary,*
Phi Beta Kappa Foundation.
New York, N. Y.

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The Road to Susan

D. H. LAWRENCE AND SUSAN HIS COW. By William York Tindall. New York: Columbia University Press. 1939. 231 *pp., with index.* $2.75.

Reviewed by HARRY THORNTON MOORE

PROFESSOR TINDALL says he first became deeply interested in D. H. Lawrence after an "encounter with several members of what must be called his cult," and in some ways this book seems to be a lecture to them and others like them. Not that it is dull: if it is the most thorough study of Lawrence's writings that has yet appeared, it is also the most stimulating. The invocation of the black cow from Lawrence's ranch near Taos was a clever device: Lawrence felt a mystic relatedness between Susan and himself, and although she never became his most important symbol, she provides this book with a convenient starting point. Professor Tindall admits that he deals "less with Susan than with the road to Susan . . . and its several byways." For those who have read Lawrence attentively it will be a fascinating journey. Within its limitations it is practically a "Road to Xanadu." Lawrence's ideas are traced to their sources, and the books that moved him most are discussed in relation to the development of his philosophy. This is the first time that authentic scholarship has made its appearance in connection with the Lawrence problem.

Professor Tindall also attempts to place Lawrence in the pattern of his age. The chapter "D. H. Lawrence among the Fascists" deals cautiously and at some length with one of the most perplexing Lawrencean riddles. Lawrence was no fascist: Professor Tindall believes he was some kind of proto-fascist theocrat, and exposes the fatuousness of the totalitarians who claim Lawrence as one of themselves. He further says Lawrence would have loathed the present fascist groups, probably because he would have wanted to be dictator of his own religion. But there is better evidence than this on Lawrence's behalf in his own writings. "Kangaroo," the book in which he examined and then rejected the equivalent of fascism, will stand in his defence.

Lawrence is singled out by Professor Tindall as the most vital recent protestant against science and reason. He is damned as a belated primitive and romanticist, and his ideal of "mindlessness" is attacked with every armament of logic. Professor Tindall uses wit as one of his weapons: Lawrence "had . . . the impatience of Donald Duck;" Matthew Arnold "felt himself falling between two stools, one weak, the other waiting to be upholstered;" the behaviorists "seemed to be occupied with nothing more spiritual than pulling habits out of rats" —such quips help to lighten the journey, but somewhere along the way it begins to be apparent that a critic so rational and humorous is perhaps not the one to render the soundest verdict on Lawrence the artist. The very faculties that stood out so brilliantly in assailing the darkness-worshiping prophet would hardly be of the kind that would aid in the appreciation of the particular artistic imaginativeness of a man like Lawrence.

Not that Professor Tindall neglects altogether the creative aspects of his subject: he admits that Lawrence (whose novels and essays he considers "the best travelogues of our day") "enlarged the novel's field of sensitivity to include levels beyond those explored by Henry James or James Joyce, who penetrated the flow of awareness before him." But Professor Tindall is guilty of more than oversimplification, in the brief space he grants Lawrence the artist, when he abruptly dismisses such books as "Kangaroo" and "Aaron's Rod" as "all but unreadable." One of his charges against Lawrence the novelist is that Lawrence failed to assimilate properly his symbols and his source material. This would have amused Lawrence, who took or used only as much as he wanted, in his own private way. Another objection by Professor Tindall, who stands with I. A. Richards, is Lawrence's lack of form; he finds "The Plumed Serpent" the most satisfactory of the novels because it has a philosophical integration he misses in the others. But as far as form is generally understood in the artistic sense, "The Plumed Serpent" is one of the most formless of Lawrence's novels.

It is a mistake to assume, as Professor Tindall and T. S. Eliot have done, that most appreciative readers of Lawrence are fanatics or members of an unhealthy cult. (If the matter were brought to the test, how would T. S. Eliot feel about certain hosts of his own readers?) It is possible to read Lawrence intelligently without becoming his disciple. Perhaps these readers will be the first to recognize that in spite of its failure to appreciate the merits of Lawrence as a writer, Professor Tindall's is the most valuable book on the informational side that has yet been written about Lawrence.

Hans Otto Storm

The Ignobility of Humankind

"MADE IN U. S. A." By Hans Otto Storm. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1939. 181 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by LOUIS J. HALLE, JR.

MR. STORM would hardly agree with Melville's impassioned exclamation that "man, in the ideal, is so noble and so sparkling, such a grand and glowing creature, that over any ignominious blemish in him all his fellows should run to throw their costliest robes." His unique theme, in this second novelette as in "Pity the Tyrant," is the petty ignobility of humankind. With an artistry that has grown notably since he was last heard from, he again establishes that men are rats, each in his own way.

All the world, in this glass, is a cruise-steamer called the *India,* and all its men and women divided into three categories: officers representing the governing class, passengers in the collective role of the middle-class, and a proletarian crew. How these men and women behave when their ship grounds on an uncharted bank, when conventional law and morality no longer suffice for their security, is the subject of Mr. Storm's careful examination. If the reader expects a band to strike up or a clergyman to invoke God or an amateur philosopher to consider the implications of death, he is sadly mistaken. The characters, face to face with eternity for three whole days, are each exclusively intent on grabbing whatever is still coming to them from life. The old maid wants sex, the engineer wants to

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tell the captain where he gets off, the captain wants to retain his personal command, the crew wants anchovies. The class-system breaks down, chaos ensues. Only the navigating officer, a man of no illusions and few if any desires, a mere observer of the passing scene, retains some semblance of moral dignity. His position in the life of the ship is somewhat like that of a novelist in the life of the world at large: he can sniff the weather, but he can do nothing about it.

All this is set forth by Mr. Storm so succinctly and incisively, with such finished craftsmanship and such acrid irony, that it eats into the reader's consciousness and becomes lodged there. As a long short-story, it is an excellent piece of work, but it leaves this world we have to live in a badly shriveled and diminished planet.

Scriptures of Eight Religions

THE BIBLE OF THE WORLD. Edited by Robert O. Ballou in collaboration with Friedrich Spiegelberg, with the assistance and advice of Horace L. Friess. New York: The Viking Press. 1415 *pp., with index.* $5.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

THIS is a work which tempts one to extravagant praise. What can be said with sober truth is that never before has so much of the world's greatest religious literature, so well selected and so admirably translated, been made so easily available to the general reader. The recently published "Bible of Mankind" had the great advantage of including the valuable Bahaist scriptures, not touched upon in the present work, and it also had fuller introductions to its various sections, but "The Bible of the World" includes twice as much material. The "Bible of Mankind," put out with a distinctly religious purpose, properly stressed in its selections the underlying unity of all the great faiths and creeds; the "Bible of the World," aiming rather at intellectual interest, emphasizes equally the patent divergencies and contradictions. So we have here, together with the loftiest ethical counsel and subtle philosophical arguments, the most illogical bits of folklore and charmingly puerile legends. The book is equally suitable simply for happy reading, assisted immeasurably by its attractive format and method of presentation, and for close study with the aid of forty pages of fine-print notes, a glossary, and a cross-reference index to parallel passages.

Presumably, the felicity of general treatment is to be credited to the journalistic ability of Mr. Ballou, and the specific selections, the choice of translations, and the preparation of the notes attributed to the outstanding scholarship of his colleagues, Dr. Spiegelberg and Dr. Friess. Mr. Ballou nobly assumes sole responsibility for the most debatable feature of the book—its presentation of the life and sayings of Jesus as a kind of "synthetic story" put together by picking out passages from each of the gospels and arranging them in a vaguely chronological sequence. The unfortunate aspect of such an arrangement is that the reader who does not happen to peruse the introduction will fancy that he has found another egregious "Harmony of the Gospels," of the type that used to be popular thirty years ago. While Mr. Ballou admits that the Fourth Gospel has "fewer evidences of historicity" than the others and that it "reflects a somewhat different theology"—which is certainly putting it mildly—he defends his procedure on the ground that the average reader "attaches equal authority and the same theological significance" to each of the Gospels. Since the purpose of the whole work is enlightenment, and not the perpetuation of popular errors, Mr. Ballou's reasoning on this particular point seems rather strange.

The work is also justly open to criticism for giving a disproportionate amount of space to the most familiar material. But aside from questions of relative value, it may be said that there is almost nothing in the book that does not well deserve inclusion on the score of intrinsic interest.

The War at Sea

SEA POWER AND TODAY'S WAR. By Fletcher Pratt. New York: Harrison-Hilton Books. 1939. 237 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by EDWARD ELLSBERG

MR. PRATT'S book is required reading for every thoughtful American citizen interested in the safety of his own country. Carefully written, carefully documented, "Sea Power and Today's War" was prepared last summer for the non-technical reader, and it is published just when the safety of the Western world against the totalitarian powers rests only on one thing—sea power.

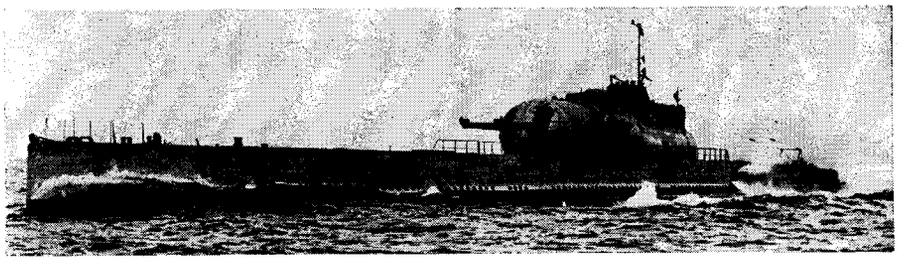
Written in language over which the non-nautical reader will not stumble, Fletcher Pratt presents most clearly the whys and wherefores of sea power. The best account I have seen in print of the forces surrounding the Washington Conference for the Limitation of Armaments back in Harding's day is here set down. What happened to be the battleship in that agreement is startlingly illuminated, and its effect on the navies of the world since (and the effect was tremendous) is made very plain.

What every nation has in the way of warships, and why they have the types they have concentrated on, Fletcher Pratt relates fully and understandingly. The book covers the strategic problems facing Britain and France on one side, and Germany on the other, and their attempts with different classes of warships to get for themselves what each considers security.

What faces the neutrals—America, Russia, Italy, the Scandinavian countries—in this battle of the giants which is going ultimately to be resolved at sea, forms the major part of "Sea Power and Today's War." The fleets of each are analyzed, their difficulties weighed, their hopes and fears unemotionally dissected.

A more timely book cannot be imagined. Americans, following closely the debates in Congress over our neutrality position, cannot afford to miss "Sea Power and Today's War" if they wish really to understand what lies behind the debates and how the safety of their own lives and the security of our institutions are bound up with the battleships, the cruisers, the submarines, and the ungainly tramp freighters that make up sea power. Fletcher Pratt, for long a close and discerning observer of naval matters, has done an excellent job.

Edward Ellsberg, Commander, U. S. N. R., is the author of "Men under the Sea" and "Hell on Ice."



The French *Surcouf*, largest submarine in the world.

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A Two-Century Run

SHAKESPEARE IN AMERICA. By Esther Cloudman Dunn. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1939. 310 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by OTIS SKINNER

AT 23rd Street and Sixth Avenue in New York stands a substantial building devoted to department-store business. Niched in its northern wall is a marble bas-relief of William Shakespeare, a replica of the Stratford bust. This building is on the site of the old Booth's Theatre, built in 1867, and from its razed wall the medallion was reset in the new structure. It marks the end of an era in New York in which Shakespearean plays formed the principal part of its theatrical bill of fare.

Miss Dunn's "Shakespeare in America" covers this period with an informative illumination from the firstlings of Shakespeare on the American stage to his semi-renascence in the productions of Cornell, Evans, Gielgud, and Orson Welles. Miss Dunn's researches in the activities of actors noted for their Shakespearean performances are so complete it may be regretted that she closed her record before the nineteenth century's 80's. Later there were notable appearances of Edwin Booth, Lawrence Barrett, Barry Sullivan, James E. Murdoch, and E. L. Davenport; there was Tomasso Salvini, whose savage Othello startled American audiences, Ludwig Barnay and the German company from Saxe-Meiningen in a notable presentation of "Julius Caesar," the epoch-making productions of Irving and Terry and the scholarly Hamlet of Johnson Forbes-Robertson; nor must the single essay into Shakespeare by John Barrymore, whose "Hamlet" ran for one hundred nights in New York, be forgotten—it lingers in many a fond memory. That our best-loved tragedian, Edwin Booth, is dismissed in a few words leaves the reader with a sense of loss.

However, the author's catholicity and thoroughness in her subject is the cause for vast satisfaction. The book is far from being a mere theatrical record, although, as William Shakespeare was first of all of the theater and for the theater, despite his eminence as our greatest English poet, he was made most familiar to the American public through stage representation. It was inevitable that the theater, sprung into England's favor at the Restoration, after years of condemnation of its practitioners (they being classed as "rogues and vagabonds"), should find its first acceptance in America in the Virginia Colony among our early "aristocrats." From thence its slow progress was ploughed through stubborn opposition northward, through Quaker prejudice in Pennsylvania and the lesser intolerance of New York and, at long last, through the outraged prejudice of stiff-necked Puritanism in Boston.

New York's tolerance was not always easy-going. As the Revolution grew nearer, detestation of anything British became rampant. It focused its venom on the Chapel Street Theatre in 1766 as the work of "Britain and the devil," stopped a performance, drove the audience to the street, and set fire to the building. Nevertheless, New York audiences had had their first taste of Theater and liked it. "In the very teeth of war two real theaters were built and maintained, hospitable to many Shakespearean plays." Acting in these early times must have been a very crude exhibition of posturing and elocution. Miss Dunn quotes Captain Graydon's criticism of Hallam: "His declamation was either mouthing or ranting . . . He could tread the stage with ease and had all the tricks and finesse of his trade."

Indians in Shakespearean costume at the time of the second Seminole war, in Florida.

By the 1830s greater refinement and subtlety had given artistry to the American theater. The period was enriched by visitors from overseas: the Keans, Edmund (of whose Shylock Coleridge said it was "like reading Shakespeare by a flash of lightning") and his son, Charles; Charles Kemble and his daughter, the fascinating Fanny, and later, William Charles Macready. One of the earliest of the comedians who left a distinguished mark in the field of Shakespearean acting was James H. Hackett. His Falstaff in "Henry IV" broke away from time-worn comic acting. Of him we learn that he tried to "get inside the skin of the character himself, to live him and act him as he was magnificently conceived in the brain of Shakespeare. His acting differs from that of conventional rendition, a gesture here, a drop of the voice there, a step forward in another place, according to set tradition."

To the influence of Shakespeare on the thought and purposes of American culture and its academic aspect many pages are given, and to the sentiments of distinguished writers who found inspiration in the words of the Bard—Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Alcott, Thoreau, Walt Whitman, and others—while our nation's leaders from Washington to Lincoln absorbed his golden words and quoted him at length in writings and public utterances. To orators like John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, and Henry Ward Beecher, Shakespeare was a gold-mine. A revealing phase in this book is the story of Abraham Lincoln's indebtedness to Shakespeare for his primal education:

> He seems not to have known anything about Shakespeare till his early twenties in the New Salem days. . . . There is a rightness, considering Lincoln's early provincial beginnings and circumscribed existence, in the *oral* nature of his acquaintance. Though he read the plays avidly he began by "hearing" them. He never lost the sense of their existence as rhetoric, whether on or off the stage. In his effort to meet single-handed the gigantic business of becoming educated, Lincoln discovered that "reading aloud" was the best way of impressing what was read on his mind. . . . This oral reading was clearly not for the entertainment of the listener but to give Lincoln, himself, the full depth and vibrancy of the lines. In his most intimate circle he would recite such speeches as Richard II's, commencing:
>
> "For God's sake let us sit upon the ground."

In his diary of August, 1863 Lincoln's secretary, John Hay, wrote, "He read Shakespeare to me, the end of 'Henry VI' and the beginning of 'Richard III,' till my eyelids caught his considerate notice and he sent me to bed." Lincoln frequently visited performances of Shakespeare in Washington. On two occasions he wrote to Hackett asking about points in the acting of the plays.

Miss Dunn's work is a welcome one, valuable alike to students of Shakespeare and lovers of the theater.

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*BOOK PREVIEW**

The Power of the Press

BY SIMEON STRUNSKY

Simeon Strunsky

SHORTLY after the 1936 election it began to be heard that President Roosevelt had won his tremendous victory with only twenty per cent of the newspapers on his side. In the course of a few weeks the estimate of Mr. Roosevelt's press support in the late campaign was cut down by his more ardent supporters to fifteen per cent. One quizzical paragrapher saw the time close at hand when Mr. Roosevelt would be the victor in 1936 with only ten per cent of the press behind him, and ultimately he might yet win the greatest popular triumph in the history of the Presidency against "the virtually united opposition of the American press," or something of the kind.

The facts were by no means so hard on the newspapers of America. In the whole country Mr. Roosevelt in 1936 had between thirty-five and forty per cent of the newspaper circulation. In the fifteen largest cities he had thirty per cent of the circulation; excluding New York, the Roosevelt circulation may have been nearer twenty-five per cent. On the other hand, the small town and country dailies and weeklies were evenly divided between Mr. Roosevelt and his opponent.

The fact remains, of course, that in the 1936 election President Roosevelt polled a vote almost exactly in inverse proportion to his newspaper support. In the nation he had sixty-three per cent of the votes and between thirty-five and forty per cent of the newspaper circulation. In the fifteen leading cities he had seventy per cent of the vote and thirty per cent of the newspaper circulation. The city figures are even more impressive if we omit New York City, where the Roosevelt and the Opposition circulations were about equal. In the other cities the ratio was four to one against Mr. Roosevelt. In some cities it was much higher. In one or two cities Mr. Roosevelt had no newspaper support at all. Yet his majorities everywhere ranged from decisive to crushing. Whatever the power of the press might be, it certainly was not the power to command the earthquake and reverse the tides.

It was a commonplace until the second Roosevelt election in 1936 that this is a Republican country. Beginning with the Harding election in 1920, when woman suffrage added sixty per cent to the electorate, this normal Republican margin was usually estimated at five million votes in an aggregate major-party vote of thirty-five to forty million. It would mean that the normal Republican vote was close to sixty per cent of both parties, and this would be not far from the Republican share of the newspaper circulation of the country as we have appraised it above. A close correspondence, however, between Republican votes and Republican newspaper circulation is not to be explained by the reason commonly advanced. It was not Republican newspaper ascendancy that produced Republican election majorities but the other way about. Republican popular majorities gave the Republican party its notable preponderance in the press. The newspapers did not shape the American people but shaped themselves to the people. In a normal Republican nation we had a normal Republican press, even as in the overwhelmingly Democratic South we have an overwhelmingly Democratic press. The press adapts itself to the general pattern. If ever the Democratic party takes over the majority status enjoyed by the Republican party from 1864 to 1928, ultimately a permanent majority of the American press will be found on the Democratic side.

If this statement of the interaction between public opinion and press leaves little of the so-called power of the press, there is nothing we can do about it as long as we think of power in the sense of domination. It simply is not true that the press molds public opinion as it sees fit, swinging the mobile vulgus hither and thither according to whim, or party interest, or class interest, or the newspaper owner's individual profit. This doctrine attained an enormous vogue after the World War, for it was a generation which grew inordinately fond of the word Propaganda, and men cited propaganda as the irresistible force which shaped everything of which they happened to disapprove. The three Republican landslides beginning with the 1920 Presidential election were explained by Democrats and radicals as the fruit of Republican propaganda exercised through a controlled press. In the same temper the Roosevelt landslide in 1932 was explained by the leading Republican newspaper of the country as due largely to the "smearing" of President Hoover by the publicity director of the Democratic National Committee. In other words, when we lose an election the hostile press is a tremendous power for evil. When we win an election in the face of a hostile press it shows that the power of the press is a sham.

What the successive landslides after the World War actually show is that the power of the press has its very distinct limitations. The thundering majorities in five Presidential elections were determined by great mass movements acting under the spur of major forces, material or emotional, in which the newspapers and the propagandists were like chips on the crest of the wave. In 1920 it was a violent popular reaction against the World War. In 1924 it was "Coolidge prosperity" superimposed on a murderous Democratic feud which tore the party in two. In 1928 it was the revolt of Protestant America against a Catholic nominee on the Democratic ticket. In 1932 the Republicans were over-

*The following article will constitute part of a chapter in "The Living Tradition," by Simeon Strunsky, to be published in November by Doubleday, Doran & Co.

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whelmed by an economic depression which shook the whole world. In 1936 it was the continued effects of the depression, reinforced by the play of new social forces which we must wait to describe and appraise; but certainly it was not propaganda or the newspapers. Little can be said for the notion that in 1932, after three years of business prostration, with twelve million men out of work and the national income down to half of 1929, it needed a slick Democratic press agent to defeat Mr. Hoover.

The power of the press is far from being an illusion if we take care to redefine both terms in accordance with realities. We must think of the power of the newspaper as stopping far short of domination, and we must think of the newspaper as consisting of a great deal more than just an editorial page plus a front page. We must think of the newspaper in the light of its complete contents. People think primarily of the editorial page when they speak of a newspaper throwing its support to this party and that candidate. A newspaper is for this man when it urges his election on the editorial page. It is against that man when it assails him on the editorial page. To be sure, partisanship may invade the news columns and especially the headlines. The news may be colored by emphasis or suppression. The reporter may be guilty of editorializing. But again we find that this familiar accusation of news colored and editorialized rests on a narrow conception of what is the news in the paper. It fails to recognize that the great bulk of news in the paper cannot be colored. It could not be otherwise if a newspaper is technically a good newspaper. Such a newspaper is bound to give a complete picture of the nation and the times; and in so doing it cannot be partisan.

What do we mean, for instance, when we say that the *New York Herald Tribune* supported Mr. Hoover and Mr. Landon in 1932 and 1936, when we say that it bitterly opposed Mr. Roosevelt? We mean primarily that the *Herald Tribune's* editorial page was strongly Republican. We may mean that its special writers in the noneditorial columns were anti-Roosevelt. We might go on to charge —if that is the way we felt—that even in the case of a fine newspaper like the *Herald Tribune* the straight news columns showed a tinge of partisanship.

Yet in a vital sense, the *Herald Tribune* was not against Mr. Roosevelt but for him in 1932 and 1936. This stalwart Republican newspaper could not help being for the Democratic candidate because as a good newspaper it was bound to picture a state of things in the nation which made the victory of the Democratic candidate inevitable. The only way in which the *Herald Tribune* could have really supported Mr. Hoover against Mr. Roosevelt in 1932 was to suppress all of its pages except the editorial page; certainly it would have had to suppress four-fifths of its pages. The *Herald Tribune* in 1932 was not supporting President Hoover as long as it continued to publish its stock-market pages with their devastating news, its general business pages mirroring a state of prostration, its general news reports showing a vast army of men out of work, its pages of news about bankruptcies, banks in liquidation, textile mills closing down, shipping paralyzed, schools shut down for lack of funds—in short, the picture of a prodigious economic collapse. It is impossible to think of a newspaper reader so low in intelligence that he could not understand from any newspaper in the country that the nation in 1932 was in a state of bitter distress. In this sense there was not a single newspaper of consequence in the country that was for Mr. Hoover and against Mr. Roosevelt in 1932. The most cheerful statement of the facts in that year was bound to defeat Mr. Hoover.

It was the same story in 1936. Four years earlier no Republican newspaper could hope to conceal from the American people the plight of the nation. In 1936 the newspapers were bound to be the record of a notable measure of recovery. The stock-market prices, the employment figures, the retail sales, the attendance at football games and basketball games and prize fights, the automobile sales, the sharp rise in marriage, the decrease in suicides from the somber figures of four years ago—here was a tale of returning national health told in a hundred different bulletins which a newspaper could not suppress without suppressing everything but its editorial page. The *Herald Tribune* and the Hearst press might be against Mr. Roosevelt editorially, but when these papers called attention on their front page to the increasing number of Help Wanted advertisements in their inside columns they were arguing for Mr. Roosevelt. At the peak of the 1936 campaign the *Chicago Tribune* failed to report a monster parade of Roosevelt supporters which was many hours in passing by the doors of the Tribune Building. This partisan gesture would be of little avail against the fact that the same number of the *Chicago Tribune* which slighted the Roosevelt parade was fat with advertisements of automobiles and department stores, unmistakably proclaiming a state of increased well-being in the country. In 1932 Mr. Hoover was defeated by business depression. In 1936 Mr. Roosevelt was re-elected by recovery. So it has regularly been in our Presidential elections; and as long as panic and prosperity continue to be mirrored in our newspapers these newspapers will be supporting the candidate designated by economic conditions for victory.

The power of the press consists in its ability to bring things out into the open. That is why in the European dictatorships the freedom of the press is among the first things to be scuttled. The autocrat is less afraid of hostile editorials than of hostile statistics. His primary concern is to load down his controlled newspapers with doctored statistics. His mission in other words is to suppress and falsify. In 1933 the newspapers in Soviet Russia were "for" Joseph Stalin not only because they chanted editorial hymns of praise to him, but because they suppressed all mention of a famine which may have taken as much as five million lives. Newspapers support governments by suppressing unfavorable facts about food prices and unemployment and homeless children and the ravages of social disease. German newspapers do not publish the number of workmen engaged in armament industries, so that we do not know what the Third Reich has really done to solve reëmployment. Neither do the German newspapers print complete figures on the Government's financial operations. Italian newspapers print rhetoric instead of news. To be sure, the trained observer can glean something of the truth in Russia, Germany, Italy out of such figures and facts as do get into print; even the most skillful of censors cannot help letting an occasional cat out of the bag.

If in 1933 Soviet Russia had been a democratic country with Joseph Stalin running for office, and if the newspapers sang his praises unceasingly on the editorial page, but on other pages printed figures showing that more than half the horses and cattle in the country had perished in the process of farm collectivization and several million peasants had been deported from their homes, then the newspapers would really have been against Stalin, and Stalin would have been defeated. For the ultimate power of the press consists in telling the truth.

Simeon Strunsky is on the editorial staff of The New York Times, *and was formerly editor of* The New York Evening Post.

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SHOLEM ASCH, *Author of "The Nazarene"*

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BRIEF extracts can only hint at the magnificent reviews with which America's critics have hailed Sholem Asch's spectacular novel of the time of Christ, "The Nazarene." And the critics themselves assert that no review, however long, can convey more than a suggestion of the power and beauty and drama to be found in the novel itself.

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A Pioneer Civil War Novel

MISS RAVENEL'S CONVERSION FROM SECESSION TO LOYALTY. By J. W. De Forest. New York: Harper & Bros. 1939. 466 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT

THIS new editon of a Civil War novel first published in 1867, with its introductory essay by Professor Haight, is an admirable enterprise. De Forest was an American realist, and a genuine one. He has suffered one of those curious spasms of neglect which occasionally overtake real workmen—even such major workmen as Herman Melville. But he must and should be reckoned with in any genuine history of the American novel. His master was Thackeray at a time when Thackeray was considered cynical, his attempt was to paint not only the men of war but the men of peace as they lived and breathed, warts and all. Roll De Forest and Howells into one, and you would have a great novelist, for while De Forest lacked Howells's technical skill, he also lacked Howells's ability to compromise with the taste of his time, and he had infinitely more audacity. As it is, his best work is marred by sloppy construction, by long-windedness, and pseudo-Thackerayesque asides to the reader. Even so fine a short story as "The Brigade Commander" is hampered by its unnecessarily melodramatic framework. But his soldiers are real soldiers, his politicians haven't changed in seventy years, and his women—particularly the bad ones—are flesh and blood. He had neither the all-or-nothing genius of Melville nor the continuous power of Mark Twain. But, in his particular period, he stands out like a rock.

"Miss Ravenel's Conversion" is a story of the Civil War by a man who had been through that war and seen the seamy side of it. It contains as admirable descriptions, not only of a battle but of the feel of army life, as you will find in American fiction. It contains a great deal of disillusion, impartially distributed between South and North. There is a magnificently bitter portrait of a politician turned officer, Gazaway, and of the Union Governor who made him a Lieutenant-Colonel over the heads of better men. But when De Forest deals with the South, he deals with it without magnolias. Dr. Ravenel dryly remarks, after having been bludgeoned by a rough in New Orleans:

> It was a mere sporadic outbreak of our local light-heartedness. The man had no design — no permanent malice . . . He saw a loyal head within reach of his bludgeon and he instinctively made a whack at it. The finest gentlemen of the city would have done as much under the same temptation.

I submit that that is an unusual tone for the American novel in the year 1867. But, besides its realism and the veracity of its war pictures, "Miss Ravenel's Conversion" succeeds in its three major characters. There is a young juvenile also, Edward Colburne, who, because his war experiences are obviously based upon De Forest's own, has a good deal more life in him than most young juveniles. But in Colonel Carter, the full-blown male, the professional man of war who can be a drunkard, a rake, a gambler, and yet a skilled and intelligent soldier, De Forest has drawn an admirably vivid and living portrait. Flawed, daring, virile, and engaging, he is completely successful from his first appearance to his death in action. Hardly less good is Lillie Ravenel, the impetuous but innocent heroine, who has a certain amount of silliness but a great deal of courage as well. And in Mrs. Larue, De Forest attempted a portrait outside of the range of most of the American fiction of his time—the portrait of a "bad" woman who not only liked being bad but succeeded at it. She may owe something to Thackeray, but she has been well-observed.

In his otherwise admirable introduction, I think Professor Haight overstresses a trifle De Forest's lack of contemporary popularity. He was never popular in the Howells sense—his realism ran ahead of his time. But his work was certainly known to the men of my father's generation, and appreciated by many of them. Also, where Professor Haight, in speaking of Colonel Carter, speaks of "the flexible moral principles that seem to have been characteristic of the West Pointer of his day," he is taking in a good deal of territory, and may shortly expect a visit from the ghost of General T. J. Jackson, C. S. A. But, otherwise, his introduction is a fine piece of work, and in helping to bring De Forest back before the public he has done a genuine service to American letters.

The White Goose

MANKA THE SKY GIPSY. By Denys Watkins-Pitchford. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1939. 258 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by DONALD CULROSS PEATTIE

SUBTITLED "The story of a wild goose," "Manka" concerns a favorite old theme with nature writers, the life of an albino animal, a bright and fated one, among dark companions destined to obscure lives.

With these well-proven materials the author works out a moving tragedy, involving essentially only two characters, "Foxy" the poacher, with his gun, dog, and punt, and Manka the goose with his white plumage, a shining target arousing the perpetual cupidity of the poacher, tormenting him by its unattainable beauty, luring them both on to their deaths. Again and again Foxy thinks he has Manka — now in baited lines, now in easy range by moonlight, now in a net, almost in a bag. Gradually one comes to a certain sympathy, at first inexplicable, with Foxy's earth-bound yearnings. He is venal, carnal, grasping, dishonest, and cruel. He wants Manka first to eat, then to sell, then, as the goose escapes him, he would be satisfied to have him stuffed and nailed, with a guffaw of pride, to his wall. Finally he would have been glad enough just to hold the mysterious, charmed life, white and despairing, in his hands, for the sadistic pleasure of feeling its beauty struggle in his dirty grasp. Foxy begins to remind me vaguely of someone—who can it be? Good Lord, not the whole human race?

And, quick! — what's your word-association with Manka? Elusive beauty? Or just Nature, perhaps, bearing us no ill-will for our sins against her, caring not one tittle if, when we slay her children and reach out to grasp their carcasses, we fall into quicksand, and are tucked under the arm of the tide? Thus dies Foxy, while the white body of Manka whom he has shot at last, scuds by him, just out of reach, upon the black tide.

Mr. Watkins-Pitchford writes lovely prose, the prose of a graphic artist, which is always vivid as to optical details. I think sometimes it is a little lulling, and this is owing to the fact that the book is slightly too long for the story and for sustaining of the mood. The long-short-story, or the very short book, has proved best for this weight of literature. Pitchford's woodcuts are exquisite. Again and again they wrung cheers from me. The author writes with hidden depths. The artist graves even deeper.

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Recommended Reading

(This column is prepared by the editors of The Saturday Review *by way of registering continued interest in books previously reviewed in these pages. It will include only current books, but none published less than a month ago.)*

ESCAPE. *By Ethel Vance.* Professional plotting, expert writing have made this the most popular novel about the Nazis and their victims; its justness of view makes it one of the best. (Reviewed September 23.)

AFTER TWELVE YEARS. *By Michael A. Musmanno.* A retelling of the Sacco-Vanzetti story by a former member of their defense counsel; valuable it-can't-happen-here material for a new generation to whom Sacco and Vanzetti are remote history, particularly recommended to older readers who think they already know all about it. (Reviewed September 23.)

OF HUMAN FREEDOM. *By Jacques Barzun.* An epigrammatic defense of democracy on the ground that, like human nature, it is inconsistent. The author sees democracy not as an absolute, not primarily as a political system, but as an intellectual climate. (Reviewed September 16.)

THE REVOLUTION OF NIHILISM. *By Hermann Rauschning.* The unpublicized aims of the Nazis for world domination, exposed by a man in a unique position to know. (Reviewed September 9.)

A TREASURY OF ART MASTERPIECES. *Edited by Thomas Craven.* 144 color reproductions of great paintings, which have been recommended for the general public even by experts and perfectionists who have made criticisms of detail. (Reviewed September 30.)

WATCH FOR THE DAWN. *By Stuart Cloete.* The events leading up to the Great Boer Trek, in an honest and strong historical novel. (Reviewed September 2.)

JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN. *By Dalton Trumbo.* Uncompromising anti-war fiction in the story of an ex-soldier reduced to almost vegetable existence. For those who can take it. (Reviewed September 9.)

CAPE HORN. *By Felix Riesenberg.* From Magellan and Schouten to the Battle of the Falklands, written in brine. (Reviewed September 30.)

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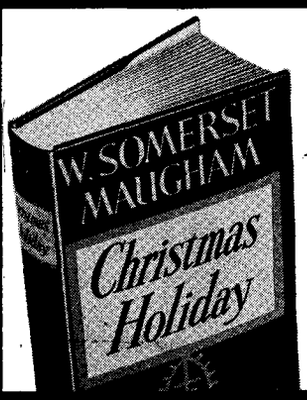
READERS TO THESE 4 BOOKS



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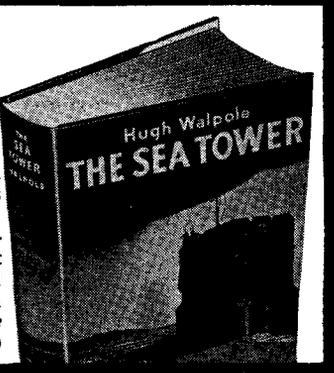

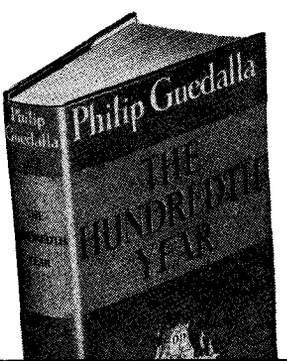

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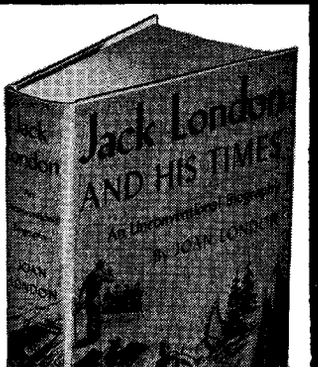

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England and Her Resources

HOW STRONG IS BRITAIN? By C. E. Count Pückler. Translated from the German by Edward Fitzgerald. New York: Veritas Press. 1939. 239 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by R. ERNEST DUPUY

Build on the flanks of Etna where the sullen smoke-puffs float—
Or bathe in tropic waters where the lean fin dogs the boat—
Cock the gun that is not loaded, cook the frozen dynamite—
But oh, beware my country, when my country grows polite!
Kipling—"Et Dona Ferentes"

THE most amazing thing about this well-written, capable analysis of British power and limitations, by a German who for a number of years was a correspondent in London, is the absence of any attempt to weigh English character. British industry, agriculture, and shipping, the vast ramifications of British banking, her military strength, strength and weakness of Empire links, problems of population—all these are set down at some length. But of the hopes and fears, the aims and ambitions of the little men, the Mr. Britlings, the drapers' clerks, the men in the City, the slow-tongued folk of the shires, never a word. So far as Count Pückler is concerned, England is populated by robots.

The author poses as no oracle in his estimates. "When dealing with economic questions," he writes, "it is easy to wade into a morass which seems to have no bottom." He admits that the British navy commands the seas—subject of course to possible inroads by submarine and air warfare. But—"Great Britain habitually wins her wars thanks to her sounder economic wind."

English industry, he feels, and quotes many figures to support his premise, presents a strength somewhat less than in pre-World War years. Her agriculture, as everyone knows, is insufficient for the home population. Summed up, "If all the other countries in the world were to make themselves economically self-sufficient, Great Britain could no longer feed her population." This naturally ties in with his discussion of British shipping, where he finds Japan and Italy taking a large part of cargoes formerly carried in British bottoms in the Far East, and the United States another slice in the Pacific.

He sees the old lady of Threadneedle street, alias the Bank of England, supporting the big English commercial banks as result of the financial crisis of 1931 and of reduction in world trade, but reaches the conclusion that the value of England's capital investments abroad today is problematical. "A gradual impoverishment" is Count Pückler's final word on general economic strength in the tight little island.

When it comes to military strength, Count Pückler, while bringing out no new points, does a very goob job of reporting. One feels that he has more of a grasp of matters military than the average correspondent. His presentation of Britain's basic problem of defense is lucid. "Britain is still an island," he remarks, "and she still enjoys all the strategic advantages of an island position. All that has happened is that a new weapon has been developed whose operations are not hampered by such a position."

The influence of the Liddell Hart school of defensive warfare for Great Britain is quite evident in the author's discussion of the problem. He sees concentration of British efforts at rearmament upon the navy and the air army primarily—including of course anti-aircraft defense. Rather interesting is the conclusion he draws of British efforts in developing the airplane for army coöperative purposes—that it is due to "close coöperation with France." His figures upon British military strength are fairly accurate when it is realized that the work was written before the adoption of conscription.

He hits the keynote in his discussion of the British navy when he states that "in a new war . . . Great Britain's battle fleet would be so superior to its enemies that it would have much greater freedom of action than it had during the last war when it was compelled to hold itself in readiness for a naval battle in the North Sea at a moment's notice."

There can be no doubt that the author has been at great pains to present an analysis unbiased by national prejudices. He has succeeded remarkably well so far as material factors are concerned; so much so that one feels, on closing the book, a distinct let-down at his failure to analyze the man behind the gun.

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Title and Author	*Crime, Place, Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
CROOKED SHADOW *Kurt Steel* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Murder of Long Islander gives Hank Hyer chance to bust up nest of Nazis and save nation from villainous plot.	Speedy yarn with more action than mystery, and neat new notion of how *Bruderschaft* might demoralize America.	Satisfactory
THE AFFAIR ON THE PAINTED DESERT *Clifford Knight* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Irascible Easterner slain in Navajo hogan. Trailer-tourist's demise quickly follows. Huntoon Rogers interrupts vacation to solve both crimes.	Weird desert background, odd aboriginal characters, lost treasure, much extra slick deducing add up to a swell yarn.	Eminent
HIDE THE BODY *Milton Propper* (Harpers: $2.)	Bankrupt Phila. broker shot. Embezzler son bludgeoned. Tommy Rankin of Central Bureau finds that hot clues can give cold comfort.	Obfuscation of shrewd sleuth shows how even most logical deductions may be suspect—and opens way to startling solution of case.	Very good
THE ELM TREE MURDER *John Rhode* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Retired clergyman, resident of English "suburban guest house," fatally conked by falling limb. Detective Waghorn tracks killer.	Double-barreled plot, involving forgery, blackmail, a not entirely believable murder device, and Dr. Priestly looming up in background.	Standard brand
SHADOWS TONIGHT *Adele Seifert* (M. S. Mill: $2.)	Rich and cantankerous old man stabbed after Thanksgiving Day gathering. Others in household perish. Gregory Trent ratiocinates.	Well characterized, plentifully supplied with thrills, and logically worked out—but murderer's motive seems weak.	Fair

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Good Hunting

TWENTY-THREE BOOKS, And The Stories Behind Them. By John T. Winterich. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1939. 241 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

IN the twenty-three papers that compose this volume, Mr. Winterich has happily mingled the characters of biographer, gossip, and bibliographer. The formal literary critic is absent because the author's plan did not require his presence. Each paper was designed to present "the circumstances of the publication of a significant, usually a great, English or American book, with some account of its introduction to a transatlantic audience (east or west, as the case may have been), the whole projected against the background of its author." And (a bare list will be most speedily informative) this is precisely what these papers do for "Paradise Lost," "Gray's Elegy," "Keats's Poems," "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," "Pride and Prejudice," "Waverley," "Jane Eyre," "Moby Dick," "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "Uncle Remus," "Treasure Island," "The Red Badge of Courage," "Two Years Before the Mast," "Emerson's Essays," "The Biglow Papers," "Walden," "The Song of Hiawatha," "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table," "Little Women," "Bacon's Essays," "Gulliver's Travel's" "The Decline and Fall," and "The Essays of Elia."

In each case the biographer sketches enough of "the background of its author" to explain the book's genesis, the curious gossip enlivens the background with odd, colorful details, while the bibliographer describes first editions and discusses "points" that are interesting and sometimes vexatious. The result is a volume packed with facts, but these facts are so successfully held in the solution of an engaging style that they seem neither hard nor dry nor embarrassingly numerous. Mr. Winterich's scholarly respect for his subjects does not exclude humor; his touch is light, his turns of phrase deft. He carries his reader with him, easily and pleasantly, all the way.

The bookish person will find much that is familiar in these pages, but no contempt will be bred by the familiarity, and even the best informed reader must, I think, find himself better informed when the last page is turned. It is possible, for example, to know that Walter Scott "once wrote 'copy' for sixty printed pages of a novel in a day," without knowing that the completion of "Waverley" had anything to do with Scott's lukewarm interest in fishing. One may remember that "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" was inspired by the execution of Charles Thomas Wooldridge, late trooper in the Royal Horse Guards, while forgetting the untimely fate of the first editor of the *London Magazine*. The man who recalls the exact cost of Thoreau's Walden hut may never have learned just what Charles II had for breakfast aboard the triumphantly returning *Swiftsure*, on the morning of May 25, 1660. That "Treasure Island," in manuscript, was entitled "The Sea Cook," and was published serially as the work of "Captain George North" may not surprise a reader who must admit surprise at being told that the *Constitution* was only twelve years old when it was immortalized as "Old Ironsides." One may dimly recollect that Routledge offered Bulwer-Lytton a fabulous sum for the privilege of issuing low-priced reprints of his novels over a period of ten years, and still yearn to be informed as to the precise method of concocting the "champagne foam, manufactured of beaten eggs, loaf sugar, and champagne," with which Melville was entertained by Hawthorne on January 12, 1851.

In short, however rich and curious your bookish lore, Mr. Winterich will almost certainly augment and adorn it, while charming you into the bargain. Here is good hunting for those devoted to a gentle sport. But, let it be whispered, amateurs of first editions will have to look behind this blue-bound, aptly illustrated volume which bears the date 1939 on its titlepage and the date 1938 on its copyright page. The first edition of "Twenty-Three Books," without index and illustrations, was published last year by the Book Arts Club of the University of California, in an edition of 750 copies, of which 650 were for sale at a price twice that of the present volume. The plates of the first edition have been used for this issue.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 291)

SYDNEY SMITH:
EDINBURGH REVIEW

For it is surely true that knowledge . . . does as much mischief to one sex as to the other and gives birth to fully as much arrogance, inattention to common affairs, and eccentricity among men as it does among women.

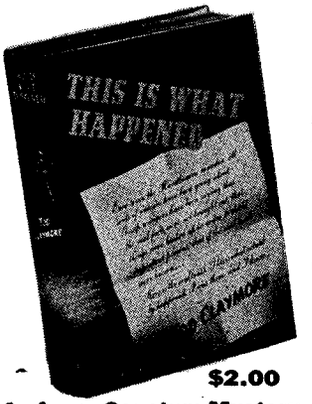
In Love with a Genius

VANESSA AND THE DEAN. The Ironic History of Esther Vanhomrigh and Jonathan Swift. By Lewis Gibbs. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co. 1939. 271 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ALEXANDER COWIE

NOTHING could have been unwiser than to allow oneself to fall in love with Doctor Swift. He was proud and he was ambitious. Despite his cynicism he had an interest in the sex, but he seems to have been inhibited by some phobia or obsession which only a psychiatrist could have guessed at. Else why not marry a comely, intelligent girl with an ample portion like Esther Vanhomrigh? But he was not to be caught. While Vanessa was fixing her nets, he would slip off to Ireland on business, quite careless of the wound his departure created. Ireland—it was a cursed place for all concerned. To Swift it was a perpetual reminder of failure in public life, a barbarous land where one met only second-rate minds at dinner. To Vanessa it was not only the monster which stole her lover but also the home of that other Esther (called Stella) whose tenure in the Dean's affections, if not deeper, was of longer duration. When against his will Vanessa followed him and intrenched herself outside Dublin, she was in the last stages of a hopeless campaign. The final break with Swift came too late to save Vanessa from her own folly.

Why didn't Swift marry one of his willing Esthers? Biographers will never know. Neither will novelists. Lewis Gibbs, who recounts Vanessa's history "in the form of a novel," believes that Vanessa has never received sufficiently sympathetic treatment. Accordingly he highlights her suffering and shades her aggressiveness. Oddly enough, Mr. Gibbs, though a professional novelist, is most effective in this book when he is dealing with honest fact; the fiction he laboriously coins has a hollow ring. The book as a whole lacks great distinction. Its best qualities are compactness, generally clean workmanship, and readability.



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THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED
by Tod Claymore

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The New Books

Fiction

AXEL. By Freda Lingstrom. Little, Brown. 401 *pp.* 1939. $2.50.

Freda Lingstrom had the best of all possible sources for the material from which she weaves her novel: her own personal experience. She has known the pleasure, the bafflement, and the hard work of trying to raise an adopted family, and that is the core of the story of "Axel."

Axel Wreford, unmarried and forty-five, takes upon himself the responsibility of becoming a foster-father to three children. And, since incongruity is still dear to the human heart, this attempt of a middle-aged man to mother a brood of highly individual offspring provides in the earlier sections of the book diverting evidences of man's incapacity in the face of fickle circumstance. Auriel, a bewitching, headstrong little orphan, was chosen for beauty and charm; Paul, the second addition, for almost the opposite reasons. As surely as Auriel complicated situations through a sense of her own attractiveness, so surely did Paul bring havoc upon the little circle through his constant urge to compensate for his own inferiority feelings. The third adoption introduced an element of balance in Knud whose more stable nature and seriousmindedness smoothed out many difficulties en famille when they got beyond Axel's comprehension.

After dealing in the first part of her novel with the general turmoil of family life, Miss Lingstrom takes up the story of each orphan separately. Here, where the three meet the confusions and problems of adolescence, they fall into the more stereotyped and lose much of the spontaneity which made their earlier adventures so amusing. Miss Lingstrom is at her best in the whimsicalities of character and in her lighter scenes; when she writes in more serious vein, her style loses something of its individuality.

G. G.

AS FOR THE WOMAN. By Francis Iles. Doubleday, Doran. 1939. 294 *pp.* $2.50.

According to his publishers, Mr. Iles has made a "decided departure" in this new novel. He has written not a murder story but "an ironic psychological study of a love-affair" between an adolescent and a married woman of thirty-five. Actually, Mr. Iles has made no departure at all; he has merely carried the technique of the casual murder story a step farther. "As for the Woman" goes Dorothy Sayers one better; it is a love story without even detective interruptions, with very little suspense, and—ultimate deception—no corpse. And yet poor feeble Alan is driven to the point of wanting to kill Fred, his Evelyn's husband; what follows is irrelevant.

Mr. Iles's crisp, clear, 250-page exposé of the flatness of late adolescence is less amusing than embarrassing; it is uncomfortable reading for anyone who has ever been twenty-one. The chief reward for lingering on in "As for the Woman" is the surprise ending. For the background, characters, and for the neat torture of the last fifty pages, the book is worth reading, in spite of the exasperation the two main characters arouse.

K. S.

War

HOW WAR CAME. By Raymond Gram Swing. Norton. 1939. 266 *pp.* $2.

The "news commentary" is a type of radio broadcasting that is peculiarly American, for it depends upon freedom of the microphone. Mr. H. V. Kaltenborn was the hero of radio throughout the events leading to Munich; Mr. Raymond Gram Swing was the star performer during the war of words last August. Like Mr. Kaltenborn, whose broadcasts were published last year under the title "I Broadcast the Crisis," Mr. Swing has collected his scripts for the reading public.

Mr. Swing's narrative begins quite properly with the German invasion of Czechoslovakia in March 1939. The entire first half of this book deals with the mounting tension over Danzig and the British efforts to create a "peace front," ending with the second great turning-point on August 21, when the Nazi-Soviet rapprochement was announced. During the "fourteen days" of diplomatic and military preparation for war, Mr. Swing spoke two or three times every day over the Mutual network, summarizing the latest news and fitting it into the ever-widening pattern of events.

It would be unfair to pass judgment on "How War Came" as an authoritative analysis of diplomacy, for —as Mr. Swing states in his preface— not all the evidence is yet available. Mr. Swing was unusually careful never to guess when he was uncertain of his facts, particularly in the mysterious negotiations that were carried on at Moscow. In his concluding broadcast, Mr. Swing blames Hitler for precipitating the present conflict but reminds his listeners that Britain and France made fatal mistakes at and after Versailles. Like many of his fellow Americans, he asks the Allies to state their war aims in full—a request that Chamberlain and Daladier seem strangely unwilling to fulfill. By his accuracy, keen insight, and restraint Mr. Swing has served his listening and reading public well.

J. F. G.

If you want to keep ahead of the headlines, read . . .

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Trade Winds

BY P. E. G. QUERCUS

WE are puzzled by Fletcher Pratt saying (in this *Review* last week) that Walt Whitman remained in the Civil War "a totally disinterested participant." It seems to us we have never read more deeply participating testimony than Whitman's prose notes on that War in *Specimen Days*. We haven't the book handy, but remember especially one passage on the theme that "The real War will never get into the books." ☞In one of his poems Walt said "I do not pity the wounded person, I myself become the wounded person." ☞Our mind sometimes recurs to the preface in Santayana's *Character and Opinion in the U. S.* Writing in 1920 he said "A flood of barbarism may soon level all the fair works of our Christian ancestors. . . . Romantic Christendom—picturesque, passionate, unhappy episode—may be coming to an end." ☞He added with sombre gusto "such a catastrophe would be no reason for despair."

☞Two novels published this month pay rather special homage to Manet's painting *Olympia,* which Tom Craven in his *Treasury of Art Masterpieces* calls infamous. ☞Probably Old Q.'s favorite among all the pictures reproduced by Craven is John Sloan's *McSorley's Bar*. It was painted in 1912, when McSorley's was (Craven says) "The rendezvous of the lowly." ☞It became our own rendezvous in 1913, the first barroom we ever visited in New York City. ☞The painting is now in Detroit. ☞Thinking back on old times, what a pity that 25 years ago there was no vogue for anecdotal and confessional books written by doctors. For instance those three volumes by Dr. Robert T. Morris (*Microbes and Men, A Surgeon's Philosophy, Doctors vs. Folks*) which Doubleday published in 1915. They were about 20 years ahead of their time; they still remain among our favorite pick-ups for moments of sedative seclusion. ☞The saddest book we read last week was Wilfred Partington's *Forging Ahead* (Putnam) the true and grisly story of Thomas J. Wise, world-famous book collector and bibliographer—and manufacturer of fake rarities. ☞This is a return, in popular and jocular vein, to the bomb let fall upon the world of belles lettres in 1934 by Messrs. Carter and Pollard in their famous *Enquiry into the Nature of Certain 19th Century Pamphlets.* ☞Mr. Partington's book is a tragic and hilarious Must for bibliophiles who can take it. ☞We specially enjoy his description of Swinburne pickled in a bookshop. ☞*Forging Ahead* has been placed by at least one ironist next to the prefatory tributes to Mr. Wise by eminent hands, written for the Ashley Library Catalogue. These prefaces were collected in one small volume (1934) under the rare imprint of William H. Smith, Jr. ☞One of the most amazing points made by Partington is that the exposure of Wise's chicanery began as far back as 1903 and yet it took more than 30 years before the scandal broke loose.

☞We gather from show-windows that the rumored revival of the corset, modestly mentioned here some time ago, is actually taking place. The classic discussion of this matter, with the kinetics and aesthetics involved, is in Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*, a book which this year celebrated its 40th birthday. ☞We wonder how many people realize that is one of the most perfect books for reading aloud, certainly as good as Samuel Butler, Saki, and Mark Twain. ☞The S. A. B. R. (Society of Amateur Book Reviewers) who write about books not for hire or routine but only when moved by peremptory excitement have added to their files the October bulletin of R. K. Leavitt (Scarsdale, N. Y.) which spreads a Mae West spinnaker in honor of Riesenberg's *Cape Horn*.

☞Recent anniversaries: the 10th of Young Books, 714 Madison Avenue, N. Y. C., the only shop in New York that specializes exclusively in juveniles—and also has a doll department. ☞The 50th of the universally admired Public Library in Newark, N. J. Books in Newark began with the arrival of Rev. Abraham Pierson on the Passaic River in 1666 with several hundred volumes—probably theological. The immediate predecessor of the present Library was a subscription association founded in 1845. Under John Cotton Dana and Beatrice Winser the Newark Library has become famous everywhere. ☞Has the fit word been said (if so, we missed it) to honor Booth Tarkington's 70th birthday, which happened last summer? ☞Dr. Herbert Putnam, retired Librarian of Congress, was given a luncheon at the Knickerbocker Club by Joseph W. Lippincott to receive this year's Lippincott Award. Dr. Putnam gently chaffed his fellow bibliothecaries on the priestly rituals of modern library science, remarking "I was never ordained a librarian." ☞The Booksellers' Association of Philadelphia reports itself in lively fettle this winter. The October meeting was attended by over 70 members, with a program presented by Sidney Williams, literary editor of the Phila. *Inquirer* and others of that newspaper's staff. The president of the association this year is Dickson Ash of the John C. Winston Company.

☞Frederic F. Van de Water and others busily planning the Vermont Book Fair—at Brattleboro, on October 31—are gratified and perhaps secretly a little alarmed, that *Life* will send photographers to record this high spot in rural bibliodisia. ☞May Henderson Taylor (147 West 23, Los Angeles) asks if anyone is interested in the Widow Bedott, whose stuff was published in the 1840's and 50's. M. H. T. has an 1856 copy of the *Widow Bedott Papers* which she hankers to lend to anyone who enjoys American doggerel of that period. The Widow wrote like this:—

Today we're liable to fall,
Tomorrow up we climb,
For t'ain't our nature to enjoy
Religion all the time.

Records in Review

By EDWARD CANBY

TWO recent recordings should give inspiration to all of us who have been driven from contemporary music by the deafening variety of sounds thus classified. A couple of hearings of *Ernest Bloch's* new (1938) *violin concerto* (Columbia M-380. $6) should convince the most skeptical that intelligible music can still be written without resorting to antiquarianism. Bloch writes here in the grand tradition of the orchestral concerto, expressive, passionate music with none of the affected dryness of the Franco-Russian school or the self-conscious nationalism of our own younger writers. His music is strongly modal, somewhat exotic in flavor, reminiscent of the Hungarian influence in much nineteenth-century music. Joseph Szigeti is the excellent violinist. *Paul Hindemith's viola sonata no. 3* (1939) (Victor M-572. $5.75) played by the composer with the powerful Sanroma at the piano, continues the solid tradition of German chamber music. Here again a skilled and fluent mind is reflected in music which speaks concisely and to the point, if perhaps without great inspiration. Note the amusing last movement, where the piano giggles like a hysterical dwarf. The balance between the instruments is none too good. *Beethoven's* early *Septet* in E flat, opus 20 (V M-571. $7.50) is the imma-

Take this Child

By ROBERT LIDDELL

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ture work of a great composer whose technical mastery at this stage was already prodigious. Only emotional depth is lacking—purposefully, for this is the apotheosis of dinner music, full of that sense of humor which the later Beethoven so seldom shows. Certainly those who condemn this music merely because the same man composed the fifth symphony show the essence of false sophistication. The work is full of intimations of genius, as in variations 3 and 4 of the 4th movement, where for a moment Beethoven forgets his gaiety for a bit of the limitless serenity of the last quartets. Note variation 3's strange resemblance to a part of Brahms's Haydn Variations. The unusual combination of instruments with its tang of the German beer garden is played most capably by members of the British BBC orchestra. Little need be said of Bruno Walter's recording of *Mozart's Jupiter Symphony no. 41* (Vienna Philharmonic; V M-584. $5.75) except that it represents the careful, scholarly German interpretation, a bit unimaginative, a bit slow, but preferable to the whirlwind virtuosities of the Russian and Italian maestros. The recording is superb. A noble experiment is the recording of an anthology of English poetry spoken by Edith Evans, English actress. (The Voice of Poetry, Vol. 1. C M-375. $6.) Important objections to such a venture are the inevitable intrusion of the reader's alien personality and interpretation, and the grave mechanical difficulties. Here we must cope with Miss Evans's very British accent plus the microphone's difficulty with the letter S. But in spite of all this the venture is, for me, a success; the age-old power of spoken verse meets all the exigencies of the canning process. The anthology includes nineteen contrasted poets ranging from Shakespeare to De la Mare. Victor's recording of *Handel's Organ Concerto no. 10 in D minor,* first of a new series, is an expensive disappointment. (V M-587. $4.50.) Played capably on the specially built Germanic Museum organ at Harvard, the beauty of the work is destroyed by an echo which smacks of bare concrete walls rather than Gothic vaults. *Hector Berlioz* has been judged too often by his long-winded and bombastic Fantastic Symphony; two numbers from his oratorio, "L'Enfance du Christ," will be a revelation to most listeners of a totally different Berlioz. (C P699340D and 69693D. $1.50 each.) Simple, tender, pastoral, this music recalls the marvelously pure music of Gluck. The fourth side presents a fine DesPres motet in quite undistinguished performance. *A Haydn Minuet and Fugue* is coupled with *Purcell's 3rd Fantasia* on C P69687D. The minuet, unidentified, has a deal of life; the fugue is routine. The Fantasia, while not equal to the Fantasia on One Note, is worth the money. Performance, by the Pasquier Trio, uneventful.

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Double-Crostics: No. 292

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

1-U		2-X	3-L	4-E	5-H	6-Y	7-I	8-J		9-U	10-A	11-F		12-S	13-E	14-J	15-F
16-D		17-E	18-V	19-J	20-W		21-D	22-N	23-L	24-K	25-V		26-U	27-T	28-D	29-Y	
30-P	31-N	32-T	33-B	34-H		35-A	36-U		37-Z	38-I	39-W	40-G	41-B		42-N	43-O	44-J
45-U		46-E	47-M	48-P	49-W	50-K	51-Q	52-R	53-J		54-L	55-D	56-R	57-U	58-J		59-A
60-O	61-I		62-Y	63-Q	64-K	65-L	66-C	67-N	68-F		69-R	70-I		71-O	72-I		73-V
74-P	75-A	76-T		77-X	78-D	79-L	80-B	81-R	82-C		83-F	84-U		85-K	86-A	87-T	88-G
	89-W	90-T	91-V	92-G		93-Z	94-I	95-P	96-E	97-D		98-T	99-A		100-S	101-G	102-O
103-L	104-Y	105-T	106-W		107-Z	108-W	109-K	110-U		111-F	112-U		113-Q	114-S	115-Y	116-A	117-L
118-D		119-F	120-L	121-J	122-Q	123-S		124-O	125-Z	126-G	127-U	128-I		129-F	130-E	131-W	132-Q
133-B	134-M	135-S	136-U	137-K		138-H	139-N	140-K	141-T	142-W	143-Q	144-M		145-H	146-N	147-M	148-R
149-G		150-A	151-F	152-G		153-H	154-G	155-O	156-J	157-E	158-M	159-V		160-X	161-W	162-Z	163-J
164-S	165-N		166-Z	167-T	168-Q	169-L	170-J	171-X		172-U	173-K	174-I		175-F	176-N	177-L	178-D
179-C		180-F	181-P		182-L	183-C	184-E	185-Y									

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 19 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Jewish liturgical poems of obedience to commandments.

B. Shakespearean king.

C. Icelandic literature.

D. Athenian historian.

E. Crafty device.

F. Narrow margin (in danger) (comp.)

G. English poet and novelist (1873-).

H. Sharpened.

I. Seat of English coöperative movement (est. 1844).

J. Opposed to cultural progress.

K. Excel as of a higher group.

L. Tending to excite controversy.

M. Where Saul consulted a witch.

N. American etcher and painter (1834-1903).

O. American painters (1825-94) (1854-1926).

P. Norse Fates.

Q. Slaver.

R. Mourning garment.

S. Mandates.

T. A Brontë character.

U. The Clermont (2 wds.)

V. The end (symbol).

W. French cheese of ewe's milk.

X. Newts.

Y. Anther and filament (floral).

Z. Argue over and over to an end.

WORDS

59 116 86 150 75 99 35 10

80 41 133 33

66 82 179 183

78 55 118 178 21 97 28 16

130 4 96 184 17 157 46 13

151 111 129 119 68 15 180 175 83 11

152 101 149 126 92 154 40 88

5 138 153 34 145

174 72 7 38 61 94 128 70

156 8 14 44 163 170 53 19 121 58

173 50 85 24 109 64 140 137

103 169 177 182 120 54 23 3 79 65 117

147 158 144 47 134

146 31 139 165 42 176 22 67

43 60 71 102 124 155

181 74 95 48 30

122 143 168 113 132 63 51

52 56 69 148 81

135 114 100 164 12 123

27 32 141 167 76 105 98 87 90

26 136 127 9 1 112 57 172 36 45 110 81

91 73 25 159 18

20 142 49 161 108 89 39 131 106

77 160 171 2

62 6 115 29 104 185

166 107 162 93 37 125

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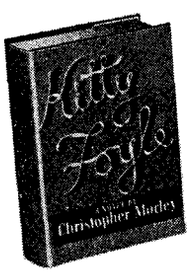

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